COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN

NEWS RELEASE

SARA Goes to ASIA
Davis Introduces Acquisition System Improvement Act *to Advance
Procurement Reform; Legislation Picks up Effort
Where Last Year's* Services Acquisition Reform Act *Left Off*

Washington, D.C. – Tom Davis (R-VA), chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, announced today that he has introduced the "Acquisition System Improvement Act" to modernize and streamline the federal government's procurement operations.

Last year, the Davis-sponsored "Services Acquisition Reform Act" (SARA, introduced as H.R. 1837) was signed into law as part of the Defense Department authorization bill. However, some provisions of the original legislation were not included in the Defense authorization bill – those provisions make up the bulk of the "Acquisition System Improvement Act" (ASIA) introduced by Davis today.

"This legislation continues my efforts to provide the federal government greater access to the commercial marketplace, and to get the right people with the right skills in place to manage the acquisition of services and technology so necessary to the government," Davis said. "My goal is to have the government approach the best practices of industry, particularly in the acquisition of cutting-edge information technology and management services. SARA moved us far in that direction, and ASIA will add to those improvements we've already put in place."

Among the provisions included in the Acquisition System Improvement Act are:

- **Creation of an Acquisition Professional Exchange Program** to permit the exchange of high-performing acquisition professionals between the federal government and participating private-sector concerns, providing employees from both sectors with invaluable first-hand experience and insight to bring back to their respective organizations.

- **Additional Share-in-Savings Initiatives** to increase the use of these innovative contracts beyond the realm of information technology. Share-in-savings contracts encourage industry to share creative technology and managerial solutions so that agencies can lower costs and improve service delivery without large up-front investments.

- **Simplified Acquisition Procedures for Commercial Items**. The legislation would provide for an extension (until January 1, 2009) of the streamlined provisions for the award of contracts valued at up to $5 million for commercial items.

- **Redundancy in Procurement of Telecommunications Services**. The legislation would require that, to the maximum extent practicable, government telecommunications purchases include: 1) redundant and physically separate entry points to a building so that damage to a single conduit or wireless transceiver does not incapacitate an agency's communications; and 2) be routed by a carrier over physically diverse local network facilities so that the failure of a single switch, router or cable does not disrupt agency communications. These provisions would guarantee extra capacity would be available given a sudden increase in demand or partial outages.

- **Agency-Level Acquisition Protests** would be permitted. The legislation would provide a "stay" of the award during the 20-working-day period an agency is given to decide the protest. Overall, the provisions concerning agency protests would put into statute the current regulatory agency protest process.

- **Consolidating Various Agency Boards of Contract Appeals** into two boards, one at Defense for the military and one at the General Services Administration for civilian contracts. This provision revives a piece of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1995 that was dropped (as part of a compromise over the protest process) during the conference negotiations between the House and Senate. This provision adds needed efficiency to the existing structure where different contract appeals boards issue different interpretations of the same laws, while leaving in place the well-tested dispute resolution process.

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